

**State Workforce Information and Regional Economies: “Next Steps”
June 20, 2007**

Visioning Exercise

Overall Selected Responses for Report Out:

Data trumps politics and should be used to promote diverse cultures for good workforce planning.

Use new media to reach new customers with new methodology.

Think global, act regional, benefit local. Identify the benefits of collaboration, and then foster a social networking system with the involved partners to create win-win attitudes and results.

Write summaries and post on the web and then combine into one composite for management.

Do regional government summit.

1. What are the key learnings that you received from the conference that relate to your state’s workforce information and regional economies?

To look at the regional economy, you should take a step back and look at non-traditional indicators. As an example, an analysis of the number of gay bars in a region may indicate a regional economy that is diverse, flexible, and willing to think out of the box.

The group also indicated that data trumps politics. The group agreed that good data is essential for good decision making and that good data can positively impact political decisions.

The group thought it was important to get information to the customer, but also to receive information from the customer regarding the value of the information received and other things the customer needs. As an example, the group agreed with one of the conference presenters that spoke regarding a state’s website. The speaker indicated that it is crucial that the website be current and that information and presentation on the website be re-evaluated to make sure that the information meets the needs of the customer.

The group discussed briefly IMPLAN. The group indicated that IMPLAN is a useful tool for internal audiences, but would not be as useful for reaching existing audiences, new audiences, and what is needed for new audiences.

The group also agreed that data cannot result in “feeding the beast”. We must ensure that the system does not become bigger than the customer. The accumulation of data needs to be based on current needs; not just what we historically did. As an example, in the health care industry, data must be on current events; health care projections cannot be based on historical data.

The group briefly discussed how Indiana was approaching competency development. Indiana identified a person’s competency and then established a goal to go one step up and use a skill enhancement tool to achieve one step up.

2. List new approaches, tools, and enhancements to the current state workforce information system that will better serve regional economies.

The group thought that Wisconsin's Worknet was a good tool to help with workforce information. The group also thought that the State's Office of Economic Advisors can assist with workforce information. The group also thought that one enhancement would be to use tools already on the State's website and enhance them.

Another enhancement would be to make most publications accessible via the Internet. This way printed publications might be more accessible. This would also be a way to reduce the cost of printing publications. Another enhancement would be to use new media to reach new customers with new methodology which would translate into reaching more customers with more information on workforce skills, etc.

Another enhancement would be to take the one stop centers on the road, i.e. to have itinerate or mobile centers for hospitals, libraries, shopping malls, prisons, etc.

Also, the group discussed what Mr. Barlow said regarding needing comparative information for broader regions and even internationally so that the State can showcase its strengths and identify weaknesses. The State should take advantage of the internet to deliver information to its customers and to draw employers to Wisconsin. As an example, the State could showcase its diversity by showing it has many different languages in the schools and communities.

The group thought the State needed to learn what the outputs of Wisconsin are so it understands what inputs need to be available in order to identify the State's "niche", and then market that "niche", and enhance the outputs.

The State has information on communities and businesses so the information could be packaged to match workforce development activities, economic development activities, and community development activities. The group also thought State staff should work more closely with the GROW Wisconsin initiative to foster economic development and workforce development partnerships. Another enhancement would be to stop thinking about who we are, and develop a team mentality of economic development and workforce development to build relationships and ensure strong partnerships.

The group also decided that it was important to incorporate the business view and business needs in decisions that are made. The local board members are an ideal vehicle to "spread the word" regarding E&T services and workforce information. The group reflected on Indiana's presentation regarding social networking. The group thought that social networking would be a good strategy to use, i.e. use board members to identify networks and use the networks to strengthen business relationships, articulating a clear purpose and benefit. The group also felt that the system could enhance the use of the job developers to more actively engage the business community.

The group also thought that immigration is a workforce development tool and the impact of federal legislation could be positive or negative. So one enhancement would be to positively address immigration to show the benefits to business partners.

3. Identify ways that key constituency groups can work better together to advance the use of workforce information to support regional economies within your state.

The groups indicated that business, education, economic development and workforce development are all partners and need to work together. The group indicated that developing work groups, user groups, etc. would advance workforce information and regional partnerships. One of the most effective steps would be to set up a system that is designed internally and externally to collaborate, partner and to enhance the sharing of information among partners. Social networking with partners would also be advantageous. Top management would also need to encourage and participate in this partnering effort.

Another suggestion was to form a workforce team to help foster local partnerships and regional collaboration. It was also suggested to hold regional summits throughout the State. Another suggestions was that a regional “governance” group could be established which could market “regionalism”.

The group thought that the major key ingredient to establishing and keeping long-term partnerships is to ensure benefit for all. In a regional partnership, benefits must accrue to the region and to the individual partners. Benefit could be in the form of lower cost, increased volume, value added, etc.

The group again indicated that the State needed to develop its own “Niche(s)” to market the State. This is not an easy task, though, since so often partners come to the table with their own agendas. Any State-specific “niche” must show benefit for all partners.

Other key elements for long-term relationships included trust, good communication, sharing information, openness, and global-mindedness.

To address global-mindedness, the group suggested writing a business plan with a global mind set to show how partners can do more collectively together to reach out to new markets. The business plan could include work groups working together to build a strong labor market information data base. Service and asset mapping could also be used to show services available and labor force skills in the region. WRIS data could be used to show wage information.

The group also pointed out that the University of Wisconsin has the largest video conferencing network in the State. As a result, the group thought the State should partner with the University to better reach and communicate with all partners, customers, and businesses throughout the State.

The group felt it would have the most effect focusing on smaller companies. The group thought the State could use IMPLAN to show smaller companies the benefit of working together. As an

example, using IMPLAN the data might indicate that there are 400 new jobs in the region of which 50 jobs are in the local area, so if we all work together we all benefit.

The group discussed how relationships could be enhanced and how outreach to young adults could be done through the various partners. One example was to do reverse mentoring with 12 years olds. This way as adults, we would learn what's important to youth and the best way to reach the youth of today.

One obstacle that the group discussed was that Wisconsin is competing with Iowa and Illinois. Wisconsin's incomes are lower and Wisconsin does not have many venture capitalists to fund new business entrepreneurs. Addressing this issue would be an ideal opportunity for key constituents to work together.

Another obstacle that will need to be addressed is if Wisconsin encourages companies to relocate into Wisconsin and the company "imports" workers from other states to fill the jobs. As an example, in a presentation Missouri indicated that many auto workers were laid off and auto workers are skilled so the State and local areas courted Toyota & Honda to locate in the State with the State agency touting that the State already had a trained workforce. Then laid-off Michigan auto workers relocated to Missouri for the jobs and the State had to handle the negative press that the State was providing jobs to workers that were not from Missouri.

The group concluded this discussion question by summarizing as follows: Think global, act regional, benefit local; identify the benefits of collaboration, then foster a social networking system with the involved partners to create win-win attitudes and benefits and results for all.

4. What steps need to be taken to advance this session's recommendations within your state?

The group agreed that starting at home, starting with the grass roots would be the most effective. The group thought that so often we work from the top down and we needed to start working from the bottom up. One way to do this would be to infuse this type of thinking by addressing cost efficiencies and value added. As an example, often times two staff members from two different units/functions would be on the road at the same time, but not together and with limited, if any, coordination. This example is ideal to show how coordination would be more efficient and effective. The group also thought that having one website, noting that the key to communication is relevancy & benefit.

Another step that was suggested was that conference attendees could write a report to communicate what the conference meant to them and share with colleagues. Each attendee could underscore what each learned individually to illustrate conference information. The "reports" could be shared with colleagues. The group thought there would be a lot a "buy in" with colleagues and the information could be shared with each colleagues "network". Each individual report could be pulled together for a presentation to upper management as a "majority opinion" (like the Supreme Court issues) to start the collaboration within the Department and then to go outside the Department. Group members also suggested that an attendee could write an article for the bulletin, or maybe each participant could have a blog to "spread the word".

Another step would be to work closer with the GROW regions in Wisconsin.

5. Identify ways to enhance cross-state and/or multi-state workforce information collaboration, where advantageous to do so.

Have regional government summits to discuss collaboration of data, partnering, etc.